

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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ANGLICAN MISSIONARIES
SET FREE BY IRAN

LONDON -- Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury was at Heathrow Airport here to greet three Anglican missionaries freed after six months detention somewhere in Iran.

The three, Dr. John and Audrey Coleman and Jean Waddell, were freed by Iranian authorities who announced that documents purporting to prove they were spies had been forged. The Colemans ran a hospital and Waddell had been secretary to exiled bishop H. B. Dehqani-Tafti.

In spite of their ordeal -- Waddell had been wounded by gunfire at her capture -- the three told reporters at the airport that they hoped someday to continue their work in Iran. They were described as jubilant over their release and told reporters that they had suffered no mistreatment during their detention.

The possibility of their returning soon is remote since the Islamic republic has proscribed the tiny Anglican Church in spite of constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion for minority faiths.

Archbishop Runcie, both in personal pleas and through his emissary Terry Waite, had labored many months to secure the freedom of the trio. Waite, a foreign affairs expert, had personally negotiated the release and escorted them back to England.

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